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# HOWARD MARKLEIN

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STATE SENATOR • 17<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

## Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

March 18, 2016

### Legislative Session Wrap Up Part 1: Marklein Bills

The Wisconsin State Senate met for the last time for the current session on Tuesday, March 15, 2016. We took up more than 100 bills, resolutions and appointments. The next session day will be in January 2017 after the November 2016 elections.

Over the next several weeks, this column will summarize the legislation that moved through the last session day, as well as an overview of our achievements throughout the session. This week, I am focused on the bills I authored or co-authored that were passed on Tuesday.

As your State Senator, I am proud of our accomplishments. We achieved good things for the 17th Senate District and the State of Wisconsin as a whole. I am honored to be a part of the legislative process and look forward to continuing to work hard for the people of southwest Wisconsin.

I was the author or co-author of 11 bills that passed the Senate on Tuesday. These proposals now move to Governor Scott Walker for signature within the next several weeks. Following is a summary of each bill:

**Assembly Bill (AB) 341 / Senate Bill (SB) 256 – Terrorist Threats** – This bill makes any threat to cause death, bodily injury, or property damage by any means to prevent the occupation of a building, vehicle, or other public place of assembly, into a Class I felony. This law would also apply if the individual intends to cause interruption or public panic. The penalty for a Class I felony in Wisconsin is a fine up to \$10,000 and/or a prison sentence of up to three years and six months. This bill aligns penalties for terrorist threats, such as threatening to shoot children at a school, with existing penalties for making a bomb threat. Co-Authored with Rep. Ed Brooks (R-Reedsburg).

**AB 441 / SB 339 - Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative** – This bill creates a Council on Veterans Employment. This council will advise and assist the Governor and state agencies with recruitment and employment of veterans in an effort to help all veterans, but especially those with a service-connected disability. The bill also requires state agencies to create a plan to recruit and retain more veterans in state government based on goals in each specific agency.

**AB 512 / SB 384 – Frank Lloyd Wright Trail** - This bill designates a highway route in the counties of Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Jefferson, Dane, Iowa, Sauk, and Richland as the “Frank Lloyd Wright Trail,” highlighting buildings that have particular significance to Frank Lloyd Wright and his career. Co-authored with Rep. Todd Novak (R-Dodgeville). Governor Scott Walker is anticipated to sign this bill on Monday, March 21, 2016 at Taliesin in Spring Green.

**AB 721 / SB 603 – Savings Bonds** - This bill provides that an abandoned U.S. savings bond held by the State of Wisconsin that remains unredeemed for five years after final maturity is presumed abandoned and subject to the custody of this state under this state's version of the Uniform Unclaimed Property Act.

**AB 731 / SB 604 – Repeal WI ABLE Account Authority** – This bill repeals the authority to create ABLE accounts in WI and creates tax benefits for contributions to ABLE accounts in other states. This bill is meant to enable all individuals with disabilities to access and create ABLE accounts from other states that are near to launching programs. Allowing access to other states will be more efficient and immediate than creating a separate program in Wisconsin.

**AB 771 - Drug Law Enforcement Grant for Lafayette County** – This bill allocates funds to assist Lafayette County in funding a full or part-time officer who will be dedicated to a drug task force. The drug task forces are instrumental in fighting the growing influx of heroin and other drugs that are becoming an increasing problem to the rural areas and Lafayette County needed state support to participate and stem the flow of drugs into and through their county. Co-authored with Rep. Todd Novak (R-Dodgeville). Governor Scott Walker is anticipated to sign this bill on Monday, March 21, 2016 in Darlington.

**AB 760 / SB 584 – DATCP Reimbursement** - This bill expands the type of enforcement actions in which a court may order a defendant to reimburse DATCP for costs incurred in preparing and prosecuting the case, including actions relating to future service plans, rental vehicles, self-service storage facilities, time shares, and foreclosure consultants. The defendant would only reimburse the state for investigative costs if he or she settles the case with a negotiated civil forfeiture or is found guilty by the courts. This bill would allow the courts to require proven violators of the law to cover these costs, as opposed to passing the costs onto taxpayers.

**AB 820 / SB 699 – Broadband Forward!** – This bill creates Broadband Forward! certification for municipalities that plan to seek broadband installation and grant funding in the future. It is a package of model ordinances that a community may adopt to prepare for working with telecommunications companies to expand broadband. This bill also directs the Public Service Commission to focus broadband expansion on priority needs and projects with economic development and community advancement elements.

### **College Affordability Package Legislation**

**AB 741 / SB 592 – Micro-grant Program** – This bill creates a micro-grant program for small emergency grants to cover an unplanned expense for a college student to prevent them from dropping out of school. Unfortunately, these financial emergencies can cause a student to drop out of school, especially non-traditional students who work while they attend school. Small grants of less than \$500 would be awarded to Technical College and two-year college students with unplanned financial emergencies, using an application-based system.

**AB 742 / SB 594 - Department of Workforce Development Internship Coordinators** - This bill creates two internship coordinator positions at the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to connect employers with universities and colleges to create internship opportunities.

**AB 744 / SB 595 – Student Debt Financial Literacy** - This bill requires that all higher education institutions send their students a letter with information about their loans, projected monthly payments,

and loan interest rates to better inform students about their debt. This effort is to help each student to make financial decisions with more information.

Again, I am very proud of the work we have done this session and I look forward to providing additional details on other legislation over the next several weeks.

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov. Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have any questions or need assistance with any state-related matters.